

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)**

**Rangelands Focus Group**

**Minutes  
November 27, 2008**

**Attending:**

**RMAC:**

**Representing**

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association
Mike Connor	Public Member
Clancy Dutra	California Farm Bureau Federation
J.R McCollister	Public Member
Chuck Pritchard	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Leonard Hale	Watershed Fire Council of Southern California
Jeff Stephens	CAL FIRE / RMAC Executive Secretary

**Members of the Public:**

Ron Eng	Department of Food And Agriculture
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**Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:**

Mike Connor called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. Introductions of all present were made.

**Item 3, Review of the September 2007 Minutes:**

Corrections were noted by Jeff Stephens. Chuck Pritchard moved to approve with corrections. J.R. McCollister seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Item 4 Discussion on the Control of Noxious Weeds as Related to State Equipment Operations**

Deferred for later discussion.

**Item 5 Draft Board Policy Number 12: Guidance on the Certified Rangeland Manager Program**

Ken Zimmerman & Mike Connor met with the Certification Panel in Bishop; however, the panel lacked a quorum. Barbara Allen-Diaz is no longer chair of the Panel. Larry Ford is now the chair. The Draft Policy 12 was discussed. The Panel took exception with the definition of rangelands. Mike Connor asked that the Panel propose an alternative. Mike Connor also suggested that Eric Huff be in attendance on the Certification Panel conference call scheduled for December 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mike Connor confirmed that the Panel does not favor Policy 11 as presently written. He suggested that RMAC encourage the Panel to propose new language where appropriate. Ken Zimmerman pointed out that the Panel really did not have a good understanding of the history of the issue. He suggested that background information be sent to the Larry Ford and the Certification Panel. He believes that the new Chair wishes to make the Certification Program more viable in the future, but lacks the historical documents that will assist in his understanding. Leonard Hale asked if it were possible to make changes in language contained within Policy 12. Jeff Stephens stated that changes by the Board are limited to the authority granted in the statute. Clancy Dutra stated that legislation would be required to alter the authority granted by statute. The changes referred to by Mr. Hale pertained to the law not clearly stating when a Certified Rangeland Manager (CRM) is required.

Chuck Pritchard asked for clarification on the requirements for a CRM and that of a Registered Professional Forester (RPF). Mike Connor stated that the two are different in that law is clear on the requirement for a RPF to have a license to practice forestry in California. There is no such requirement in law for a CRM to practice range management. Mike Connor pointed out that for some time now the national Society of Range Management has had a certification program. He has encountered some individuals who see no need to become certified in California since it is not required and they already have the National certification.

Clancy Dutra cautioned that the Certification Panel may propose alternatives that can not be supported and passed by the Board. Mike Connor agreed that close scrutiny of any proposed alternative language by the Panel is warranted.

Mike Connor asked for action items for the Focus Group based on the discussion. Ken Zimmerman suggested that RMAC send a letter to the Panel that sets a timeline for submitting recommendations. Mike Connor proposed sending the letter and asking that Larry Ford appear at the January meeting of RMAC. The Focus Group agreed to send the letter with the additional recommendation that background information also be sent to better clarify the CRM issue for Mr. Ford.

Ken Zimmerman reviewed how the issue of requiring a CRM began with RMAC due to a situation where representatives with Department of Water & Power were writing range management recommendations without State or National certification. The conclusion on the part of at least one representative Ken Zimmerman dealt with is that the State certification is not necessary for him to work as a range manager; thus the interest to revisit the issue with RMAC and potentially additional legislation to strengthen the program.

Ron Eng noted that Certified Pest Control Advisors and Applicators are required to show minimum hours for continuing education since laws and regulations change. That is what gives strength to that program. Mike Connor indicated that RMAC is working towards that end regarding continuing education.

**Item 6 Status on the National Society for Range Management Database for Continuing Education Credits:**

Mike Connor summarized his most recent contact with the National Society of Range Management (SRM) and the database that they are developing for continuing education or accreditation as referred to by the National SRM. He stated that his contacts with the National SRM are investigating the possibility of Cal-Pac using the National system for recording continuing education credits. Clancy Dutra asked if this was discussed with Larry Ford. Mike Connor indicated that he hopes to discuss it with the Certification Panel in December.

Based on correspondence with the National SRM Mike Connor stated that using the National system would require placing a data field into the data base for Cal-Pac recognized courses.

Mike Connor stated that the action item for this Group is to send a letter including background information to Larry Ford, asking him to appear at the next RMAC meeting.

**Item 7 Letter to the Cal-Pac Society of Range Management Certification Panel:  
Panel Member Response:**

Mike Connor opened by stating that RMAC asked for several things in the letter of July 26, 2007 to the Cal-Pac SRM Certification Panel. Ken Zimmerman stated that he would like to pursue a response to the RMAC letter. Mike Connor summarized the letter's content as follows:

- The exam should include vegetation types beyond annual rangelands
- CRMs asked to provide test questions
- Broaden the range of question content to reflect current events and issues
- A formal means of recording continuing education.

Mike Connor stated that he does not have an agenda for the next Certification Panel meeting, but will work to include these items at the next meeting.

Chuck Pritchard stated that the letter from Larry Ford did address the definition of rangelands and spent considerable time on the subject. Ken Zimmerman suggested that RMAC send the definition of rangelands taken from the RMAC Strategic Plan and approved by the Board to the Certification Panel along with background information.

Chuck Pritchard noted that the RMAC adopted definition is quite broad and is capable of including all types of vegetation types considered by RMAC to be grazing lands. J.R. McCollister stated that the definition includes those types singled out by the Certification Panel letter.

It was agreed by RMAC to include a copy of CCR 1651 (c) and the September Rangeland Focus Group minutes explaining the rationale for the definition adopted by RMAC.

In regards to the examination process Ken Zimmerman cited an example of a Department of Water and Power employee that received incorrect information as to the location of the CRM exam. Eventually he found the correct location but was only given one hour to take a three exam and did not pass. This person's response when asked to

take the exam again was he considers certification to have no value and therefore did not intend to take the exam again. Ken Zimmerman stated this is the crux of the problem; the program is perceived to have no value. Mike Connor responded perhaps RMAC should consider relying on the National Certification program rather than the California certification program. Neither is required by law to practice as a range manager.

Discussion turned to the qualifications for personnel managing federal rangelands and Mike Connor's original objective in supporting a State CRM Program; that the certification process would encourage the use of qualified range managers with a degree in range management rather than other specialists such as biologists on federal range lands. Chuck Pritchard asked what support exists with the producer groups for a certification program for range managers. Mike Connor stated that the concern with producers has been that they do not wish to find themselves in a situation where a CRM is required for the management of their properties. He cited the Timber Harvest Plan and Registered Professional Forester process as an example producer groups do not favor. Ken Zimmerman stated the real value of a certification program is in court. It adds credibility to the proponent's case.

Clancy Dutra reaffirmed that the letter now proposed to the Certification panel will include a reminder that RMAC wishes to have a response to the letter dated July 26, 2007. Mike Connor confirmed that the letter will contain this reminder.

#### **Item 4 Discussion on the Control of Noxious Weeds as Related to State Equipment Operations**

Mike Connor asked Jeff Stephens to Brief the Focus Group on communications that he has had with Caltrans and CAL FIRE on the subject of noxious weed control and equipment operations. Jeff Stephens stated that he had received contact from the Caltrans representative (Jennifer Gilles) indicating that a conflict prevented her appearance at RMAC today.

Leonard Hale stated that he felt to clean every piece of equipment prior to moving would be expensive and impractical given the number in use. Ken Zimmerman responded that what RMAC is proposing are some simple, inexpensive procedures that could be used. Leonard Hale still questioned whether it is feasible to clean all in use.

Jeff Stephens continued by summarizing what he learned about CAL FIRE operations. After reviewing the Issuance Manuals for equipment Mr. Stephens stated that he could not find CAL FIRE policy that was specific to cleaning equipment. However, after speaking with the Statewide Equipment Manager at Davis and the Northern Region Manager in Redding, he stated that the decision to clean equipment is largely a function of the local jurisdiction. For example, if they on a fire in a county of known infestations, or if they are operating on Federal ground where the policy is to clean then CAL FIRE respects these policies and cleans. Jeff Stephens also stated that CAL FIRE will often clean equipment prior to leaving an incident (time permitting) as a matter of maintenance and taking pride in the organization. The species cited to Jeff Stephens during his investigation are yellow star thistle and sudden oak death (SOD). J.R. McCollister stated that SOD is one of the driving forces behind cleaning equipment on the coast; however, he knew of no policies related to yellow star thistle.

Ken Zimmerman stated that what RMAC could do is to work through the CDFA and investigate whether policies for best management practices exist for equipment cleaning. Ron Eng agreed and went on to say that it is difficult to determine the number of infestations caused by agency equipment by movement within the State. He further stated that a more productive course to follow as far as controlling invasive species is to examine situations where weeds are being brought in from out of state on equipment and building materials that are imported into California. He suggested focusing on localized areas with one administrator to handle local infestations. He indicated that based on what he has heard today, his opinion is that CAL FIRE is doing a good job, and that adding additional restrictions may not achieve the desired objective. A more productive effort may result by working at the local level through the Weed Management Areas (WMAs).

Clancy Dutra asked if it would be possible for the WMAs to contact local agencies like Caltrans and inform them of zones of infestation and recommended practices. Ron Eng stated this is a function of the WMAs and stated that his WMA meets with local agencies monthly to talk about local weed problems. Clancy Dutra stated this is the best opportunity to have an impact. Ron Eng agreed.

Mike Connor asked for input in terms of what action RMAC may take at this point. Ron Eng indicated that contact with the WMAs would be most appropriately done through his office. Ken Zimmerman suggested a letter from RMAC addressed to CDFA asking that the WMAs make contact with local agencies informing them of the need to adopt practices for weed prevention. Ron Eng agreed that this would be appropriate. He also stated that he would approach Steve Schoenig with the idea.

Leonard Hale made the point that the letter should be generic and not refer to any one agency. Clancy Dutra agreed stating that the subject has become far greater than any one agency, citing Caltrans as an example.

Chuck Pritchard and Leonard Hale agreed to write the draft letter.

#### **Item 8, New and Unfinished Business**

Chuck Pritchard indicated that he shared the RMAC draft paper on integrating resource management with resource investments with the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD). The CARCD voted to accept the document as written by unanimous vote. Ken Zimmerman asked Jeff Stephens if there was any further word at locating the minutes from the Policy Committee and extracting the items requested of RMAC by that committee. Jeff Stephens indicated that there are no written minutes from the Policy Committee meeting and that he is searching for the audio notes. He has been informed that a copy may exist with the Board's staff, but to date the audio files have not been located.

#### **Item 7 Public Comment**

None

Meeting adjourned

Tasks:

1. Write a letter to the Certification Panel asking for input on Draft Policy 12 and that Larry Ford appear at the January RMAC meeting to discuss Certification Panel input.
2. Write a letter to CDFA (Steve Schoenig) asking that CDFA inquire with the State WMAs regarding policies for the prevention of noxious weeds, and ask that the WMAs contact their cooperators and inform them of the need to adopt prevention practices.